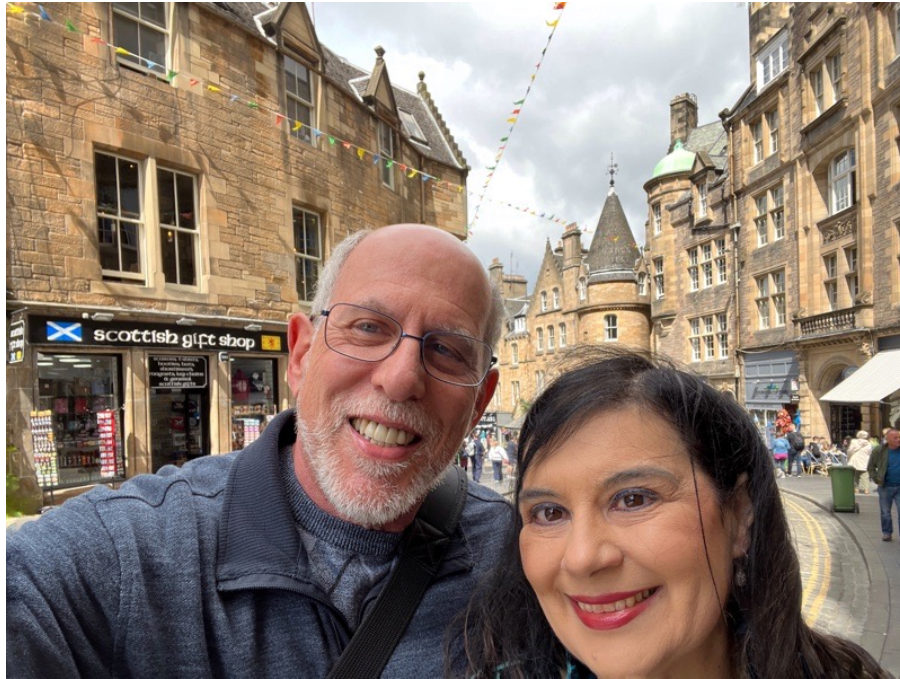


A Wee Bonnie Week in Scotland 2023 Up & Down The Royal Mile



This week we're in Edinburgh (pronounced "Ed-in-burrow"), capital of Scotland. Another long-delayed pre-pandemic-planned trip, but we're finally here!



The medieval old town developed across a hilltop, fortified and easy to defend.



The “Royal Mile” runs down the spine of the hilltop.
On one end, the Castle, a massive fortress originated in the Dark Ages....



....on the other end, a former abbey converted into a palace for The Royal Family.



Our hotel is right in the middle, so after 12 hour's sleep to catch up on jet lag — let's go!



The building in the center was a tollbooth; now it's "The Museum of The People's Story", chronicling life through the ages. It was pretty bad in olden times: hard labor, poverty, plague. Unless you were royalty, of course; then you lived like....



THIS!! At the foot of the Royal Mile is Holyrood House, palace of the British Monarchy in Scotland. The King and/or Queen stay here when they visit Edinburgh. Usually you can tour the inside, but the gates were closed; and that's because:



THE KING & QUEEN ARE HERE!
Newly crowned King Charles III is going to receive the crown & scepter of Scotland in 3 days, with all the royal pomp & circumstance. And, by pure luck — we will be here, too!



He'll be receiving "The Honors" at St Giles Church, Edinburgh's venerable cathedral.



The spire represents Scotland's crown, and dates back to 1495.
We were able to attend a concert inside (the San Francisco Boy's Choir, believe it or not).



It's in really good shape considering how old it is, although the windows are 20th Century. This view looks toward the back. The altar & pulpit are in the center of the church.



Opposite view. Judy is at the arrow (she saved my seat). I was surprised how bright & airy it was. The concert was nice, too!



View looking up the Royal Mile. The barricades are already in place for the royal procession.



There are lots of little alleyways off the Mile. This one has a view of the Walter Scott monument. His writings in the 1800's inspired Scottish national spirit and they love him here. (Neither of us have read him, but maybe now we should!)



Here it is (in the rain). It is a massive Gothic structure from 1845.
A beautiful statue of a pensive Sir Walter (with his faithful dog) sits in the center.
Perhaps he is wondering, "Why is the monument so big? It makes my statue look so small..."



Judy zoomed in for a nice shot with the clock tower in the background.



We prepare to storm the castle.... but first, we stop in at....



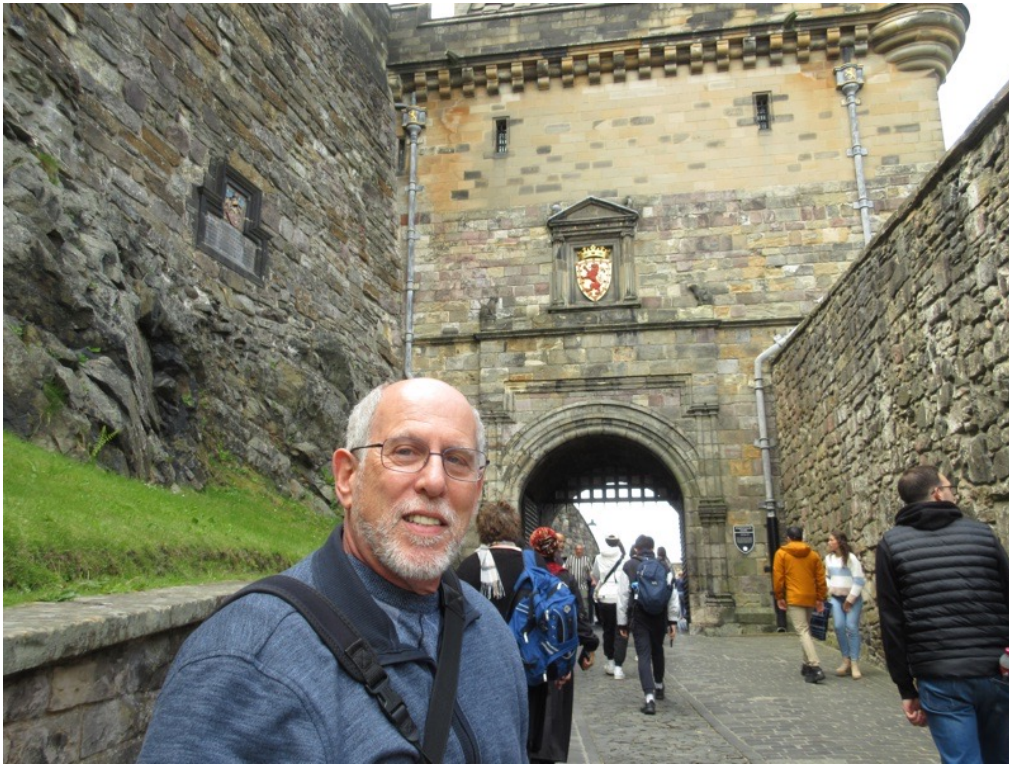
“The Whisky Experience”, where we learn all about Scotland’s most famous (and treasured) export — with samples! But only 2 tiny samples, barely enough to get a buzz.... And “whisky” (no “e”) is the proper Scottish spelling (“ey” is Irish). Gotta be culturally correct!



After the tour, the “gift shop” is huge. Obviously they want you to buy some expensive stuff.



We opted for a few sample bottles for our friends, but choosing wasn't easy — I counted **60** different varieties. I've never seen so many tiny bottles at once in my life!



Fortified by the whisky, we charge up the hill to enter the Castle!



It's like being transported back in time to the Middle Ages!
(...love the guard in full Scottish formal dress uniform with kilt...)



Once inside the gates, there are structures from multiple eras spanning hundreds of years.



We smile as we pose outside the War Memorial; but inside, it is a sad reminder of the tragedy of war.

The walls are engraved with the units and names of the thousands of Scots who died during WW I; not just soldiers, but support units including doctors, nurses, cooks, engineers, and also many civilian personnel.

Visitors silently pay respects to those who fought for the cause of freedom and paid the ultimate price.

A long time gone, but still very sad....



From atop the cliff, a commanding view of the botanical gardens, the newer city, & the harbor.



In the distance beyond the Scott Monument is a controversial new addition to the city skyline: a modern hotel. Built to invoke “a ribbon unspooling up into the sky”, it bears an unforeseen resemblance to the famous “poop emoji” and we have read that when the afternoon sun hits it, the locals refer to it as “The Golden Turd”!! I guess, if the poop fits, own it....



Huge cannons overlook the city. They used to guard the harbor, now they are ceremonial.



We were lucky and got to see them go BOOM!! Awesome!



Rigorous touring demands vigorous fueling! And when on Vacay, eat like the locals!
We came upon "Bertie's — Proper Fish & Chips"!



Wow!! Those are indeed **Proper** Fish & Chips! Piping hot and super crispy!



Judy before.... and after.... her meal! Time for a nap!



It's been a great few days — but now it's time to meet the King and Queen!
Up next on video: "A Royal Coronation in Scotland!"